

# Kyodan

## News Letter

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN

JAPAN CHRISTIAN CENTER

551 Totsukamachi 1-chome

Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan

Cable Address: Japankyodan Tokyo

Telephone: 202-0541

No. 75

June 20, 1973

//



JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR opens in Tokyo Tues., June 19, with an all-Japanese cast singing lyrics translated from the English.

The Japanese version of the rock opera whose music has been so popular in England and the United States is being produced by the Shiki Theatrical Co., one of Japan's major commercial troupes. The stars include a new face, Kaga Takeshi, as Jesus, the well-known actor Iino Osami as Judas, and Shimada Yuka, a young opera star, as Mary Magdalene.

Announcement of the production has not greatly quickened the beat of Japanese church life. Many pastors and lay persons view it as an "import" and "commercial venture" of no religious significance. But others, particularly young people and those involved in the arts, are looking forward to it, hoping that churches will watch the opera's impact on the "now" generation, with which most churches have little contact.

SOON TO BE RELEASED is the movie Shiokaritoge, based on Ayako Miura's novel, which appeared first serially in Shinto no Tomo in 1966-68 and was then published by Shinchosha, becoming a best seller.

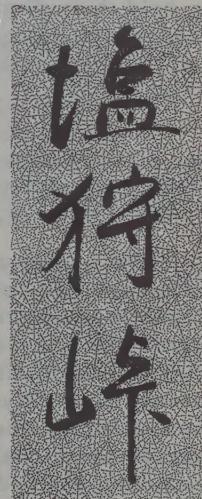
Shiokari Pass is in Hokkaido, on the railroad line between Nayoro and Asahikawa. It was here in 1909 that a connecting link broke on a train puffing its way up the steep approach to the pass, causing the passenger car to plunge back down the tracks with nothing to break its speed. Seeing only one way to stop the runaway car, a passenger threw himself under the wheels of the train, an act that resulted in his death but saved the lives of the other passengers.

The novel, Shiokaritoge, is based on the life of this man, a member of the Asahikawa Rokujo Church, who was soon to be married and who had decided to prepare for the ministry.

The film is being produced by Shochiku Motion Picture Co. under the direction of the famous director Noboru Nakamura. The movie story is said to be faithful to the novel and to present straightforwardly the application of Scripture to daily life that characterizes Miura's works.

MEANWHILE, a preview in Tokyo of a new 29-minute color film titled Something Besides Rice, produced by TRAFCO, sparked heated discussion on what mission is. The movie shows Dr. Noboru Iwamura treating T.B. patients and delivering babies as a public health doctor with the United Mission to Nepal, Rev. Rudy Kuyten mixing with Sapporo young people in the Good Hour Coffee Shop and the judo hall, and Rev. Sadao Ozawa helping distribute food in the 1971 Food Bank program in Seattle, Washington.

TRAFCO is the Television, Radio and Film Communication Div. of The United Methodist Church. Details about the film with English soundtrack are available from Mr. Gil Galloway, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, Room 1331, 475 Riverside Drive., New York, N. Y. 10027. Possibilities for use in Japan with Japanese soundtrack are being studied.



DISTRICT  
ASSEMBLY  
REPORTS

*Amidst the swirling current of theological and ideological controversy the church continues to search for some common ground of faith and loyalty to provide a solid footing. The churches at grass root level seem to be saying, "We hope that someone will find the river bottom and lead us to the bank. Meanwhile, let us keep swimming and make sure we do not drown."*

During April and May, twelve of the sixteen Kyodan districts held their annual assemblies. While churchwide controversial issues received attention and were the subject of recommendations in a few districts, the matters that received the greatest time and consideration in most districts were the more local and perennial questions of district solidarity, church mutual aid, pastors' salaries and the programs of mission.

Plans for the Kyodan General Assembly received passing attention in most districts with the reading of a report issued by the Preparations Committee. In most cases this report was received without much debate and with assent to the need for holding the Assembly. NISHI-CHUGOKU passed a resolution expressing the strong recommendation that an Assembly be convened even without delegates from the districts that have been unable to hold their district assemblies, suggesting that special delegates be appointed from these in order that all the districts could make their voices heard.

Four districts have not held assemblies for more than two years: TOKYO, OSAKA, HYOGO and KYOTO. The last named has set June 19-20 as the dates for its assembly.

The question of ordination came in for some spirited debate in three or four districts in connection with a special measure which had been adopted in 1972 by the Ministerial Qualifications Committee and approved by the Kyodan Executive Committee. In a situation where, due to suspension for a period of the qualification examinations for licensing and ordination, several young seminary graduates had had to serve pastoral charges without having been licensed (as licensed pastors), the Qualifications Committee had taken the step of approving the time spent before licensing as part of the two-year period normally required between licensing and taking the examinations leading to ordination. Many have criticized this special measure as a breach of the Kyodan Bylaws. Districts vary between approval of the special measure (TOKAI) and rejection (NISHI-CHUGOKU), with others disapproving it in principle but accepting the academic eligibility of candidates for ordination while insisting on the full two years' time requirement and therefore postponing ordination for another year (KANTO).

Debating the issue of the Confession of Faith, KYUSHU district, while upholding it as the standard of faith and practice, registered disapproval of using it as a standard for admission to ordination on the grounds that the wide variety of interpretations permissible make it unsuitable as a test of faith in any academic sense.

The relationship of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary to the Kyodan came under criticism at KYUSHU district, which called upon the Kyodan and the seminary to establish a more responsible relationship, with greater answerability to the church on the part of its related seminaries.

Internal concerns such as church solidarity, mutual support, pastors' salaries and pensions, district assessments and programs of mission occupied the major attention of most of the districts, notably HOKKAI, OU, TOHOKU, TOKAI, CHUBU, HIGASHI CHUGOKU, SHIKOKU and OKINAWA.

1873.....*Canada*.....*Japan*.....1973

On June 30, one hundred years ago, two Canadian missionaries arrived in Japan to begin work and relationships that continue today through the United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ in Japan.

Rev. Davidson Macdonald, M.D. and Rev. George Cochran were two of the first overseas missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada. Macdonald helped to establish a church in Shizuoka in addition to teaching English, carrying on an extensive medical practice and handling mission matters. Cochran, who taught English and did evangelism, was particularly influential in the training of candidates for the ministry.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church merged with other Methodist bodies in Canada in 1882; in 1925 the Canadian Methodist Church entered the new United Church of Canada.

In the item on theological seminary students appearing on page 1 of the April Kyodan News Letter, the statement that "7 out of 14 new students entering Tokyo Union Theological Seminar are women" was in error. It should have read "6 out of the 14 new freshmen are women." Newly enrolled students totalled 25.

IN SPITE OF THE REVERSION OF OKINAWA to Japan on May 15, 1972, life has improved little for the people of Okinawa. In the past year, prices have skyrocketed, making it harder than ever to eke out a living. U.S. Armed Forces continue to occupy 12% of the total area of the Ryukyu Islands and as much as 35% of the central area of the main island. The rights and wishes of Okinawans are frequently ignored both by the U.S. Forces and the central government in Tokyo.

In addition, the Japan Self Defense Forces are arriving from the mainland to assume "defense" responsibilities effective July 1. The inflow of capital, in overpowering dimensions, threatens to create an economy geared to the advantage of mainland big businesses, tourist enterprises and land speculators. Residents fear that the International Oceanic Exposition scheduled for 1975, ostensibly to encourage tourist trade, will be more destructive than constructive and delay needed local development.

In this situation, Okinawans are seeking to affirm their rights and ways, continuing to hold the goal of a peaceful Okinawa.

Kaneshi is a village in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa. Though bougainvillea brighten the landscape, the dominant crops of sugar cane and corn provide only a somber existence. A few village offices, a general store, a grammar school, a church and a kindergarten are the only landmarks. Many people have moved to the city or mainland. Those who remain are scattered in clusters of farmhouses within a wide radius. The impression is one of bare subsistence.

Yet there has evolved, in this setting, a surprisingly creative approach to education, emanating largely from the old frame kindergarten building, Kiku and Jinken Murakami, and their contacts with the families of Kaneshi. There are forty-three children--ages four and five--in the kindergarten. Mrs. Murakami is the teacher. Mr. Murakami is enso (principal) and pastor of the Kaneshi Kyodan church of 17 members, which meets in the church-parsonage next to the kindergarten.



The Murakamis meet with parents in seven different locations once a month--late in the evening, after the work in the fields is over. Together they discuss what the children have been experiencing in the kindergarten, in the family, in the neighborhood. Talk may range from financial problems to such practical concerns as how to use mayonnaise.

"We have many talents," he says, "but all I have are used to their full in the kindergarten."

The annual production of Momo Taro, begun in April and presented at Christmas, illustrates the Murakamis' approach to Education. The children hear the story, discuss it during the succeeding weeks, and out of their familiarity with their classmates and the story, do their own dialogue and casting of Momo Taro, the Monkey, the Pheasant, the Dog, and the Ogre (which sometimes ends up being the enso).

Challenging the conformity called for in plans passed down from the Ministry of Education in Tokyo, Murakami is encouraging young mothers and teachers to do their own study and prepare their own plans on the basis of Kaneshi--not Tokyo.

The whole community is behind the kindergarten. Someone brings a goat he thinks the children will enjoy, someone else, pigeons. Murakami himself is artist, musician, carpenter. "I don't

Although when the Murakamis came eleven years ago, their idea that education is nurturing the children's personalities and abilities, not imposing knowledge, was new to the community, parents and school personnel have become increasingly educationally aware, able to criticize and evaluate, in a constructive way.



The Kaneshi kindergarten exists not as a means of evangelism nor as a source of income for the church but as a service to the community. But Murakami considers it an important part of his pastoral responsibilities, undergirded by the prayers of the church members.



Jinken and Kiku met while at Tsurukawa Rural Training Institute, where he was studying for the ministry, she for kindergarten work. He had previously worked for a construction company. After two years at a Shikoku Church, the couple went to Okinawa, Mrs. Murakami's birthplace. Although Mr. Murakami is not a native, his knowledge of the local dialect shows the depth of his roots. He is active in the Christian Peacemakers' Association, on the court's domestic mediation committee and the committee to protect human rights.

what has been -- IN THE KYODAN -- what is to be

## I. Coming Events

Kyodan celebrates 32nd anniversary on June 25.

Kyoto District Assembly scheduled for June 19-20 (Shimpo 6/9)

Kyodan General Assembly Preparation Comm. will meet again July 9-10.

Executive Comm. will meet July 10-11.

District Moderators will meet in Tokyo July 11.

Kyoshi no Tomo's Education Plan Study Meeting for Sunday School teachers to be held at Japan Biblical Seminary July 23-25.

Kyodan Hymnal Comm. sponsors annual summer music workshop Aug. 19-24 at Lutheran Theological Seminary (Shimpo 6/16)

Laymen's Seminar to be held Aug. 30 - Sept. 1 at Tozanso under theme of "History and Human Beings."

## II. Recent Events

### Districts

District Assembly news: Shikoku, Kanto, Tohoku, Nishi-Chugoku, Kyushu, Hokkaido, Higashi-Chugoku (Shimpo 5/19); Ou (Shimpo 5/26); Kanagawa (Shimpo 6/2); Chubu, Tokai (Shimpo 6/9); Okinawa (Shimpo 6/19)

Tokyo sub-district news (Shimpo 5/26, 6/9)

List of new district officers (Shimpo 6/9)

### Education

Fund-raising campaign for Okinawa Christian Junior College closes May 31 -- with only half of goal of ¥16,500,000 achieved to date (Shimpo 5/26)

### People

\*\* Rev. Michio Kozaki, Moderator of the Kyodan from 1946 to 1954 and chairman of Japan National Christian Council from 1948 to 1959, died June 18 at the age of 84. He served the Reinanzaka Church in Tokyo from 1922 on, becoming pastor emeritus in 1961.

### Social

Petitions for withdrawal of emigration/immigration bill, with names of 2,700 persons plus 20 Christian and Buddhist leaders, is presented to Ministry of Justice and Diet chairman May 18 (Shimbun 5/28)

National Meeting to watch for breaches in the principle of separation of state and religion is held May 13 in Tokyo (Shimpo 5/26)

Meeting Against Yasukuni Bill by Citizens' Society to Protect Freedom of Faith and Oppose Militarization is held May 20 at Shitaya Church (Shimpo 6/2)

### Women

Dedication of Niji no Ie, retirement home for women pastors, is held May 22 (Shimpo 6/2)

## Additional New Publications of the Kyodan Board of Publications, Jan.-June 1973

(to be added to the list in the May issue)

Kyodan Nenkan 1973 (Directory)

Mienai Hitobito-Zainichi Chosenjin (Unseen people-Koreans in Japan) by J. Iinuma  
Tomeru Kirisutosha to Mazushiki Razaro (Die Reichen Christen und der Arme Lazarus) by Helmut Gollwitzer, translated by Z. Morino

Gendai Sekai to Kyokai (Modern World and Churches) Vol. III.

Gendai no Areopagos (Areopagus in Modern World) by A. Mori, Y. Furuya and T. Kato.

Rutaa ni okeru Kaikaku to Keisei (Reformation and Church Formation in Luther's Theology) by Isao Kuramatsu

Shingaku to Kirisutokyo Kyoiku (Theology and Christian Education) by I. Yamanouchi